THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a): The Central Information Commission received 10,975 appeals/complaints upto 21.08.2007.

(b) to (d) and (f) The Central Information Commission does not maintain these details.

(e) Financial penalty imposed was withdrawn in four cases.

Help to Indians in Oman

*169. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high velocity tornado played havoc with life and property in Oman during the first week of June, 2007;

(b) if so,the details of the losses suffered by Indians living in Oman; and

(c) the help provided by Indian Mission in Oman to Indians there to mitigate their hardships?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A high velocity cyclone named "GONU" struck the Sultanate of Oman on June 5-6, 2007. Seven Indians lost their lives while five are still missing. Their names are as under:

Persons who lost their lives

1. Shri Ranga Swamy Maniyaiah, Karnataka
2. Shri Pritpal Singh, Punjab
3. Shri Sarwan Kumar Balai, Rajasthan
4. Shri Bokka Srinu, Andhra Pradesh
5. Shrimati Shobana Ratesh Sharma, Maharashtra
6. Shri Mohammed Ali Poovali Parambil Beeran, Kerala
7. Shri Anil Kumar Vadika Veetuparambil, Kerala

Persons missing

1. Shri Sajit Kumar, Kerala
2. Shri C.S. Udayan, Kerala
3. Shri Sami, Andhra Pradesh
4. Shri Binu Poulose, Kerala
5. Shri Govindbhai Rajendra Kumar Mistry, Gujarat

There was loss and damage to property of the Indians. According to the Government of Oman, the total loss of property due to the Cyclone is estimated to

be around US$ 1.5 billion. The Indian Embassy at Muscat has conducted an extensive survey to assess the damage to the property of Indians and its full extent is being ascertained. However, as per the preliminary assessment, the lost/ damaged properties include household items, vehicles, machine and tools and few cases of loss of jewellery and cash have also been reported.

On 7th June, 2007, two Round-the-Clock Control Rooms were set up one each in the Embassy of India, Muscat and the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi for collecting and collating information and for responding to queries of the general public. The telephone numbers of the Control Rooms were immediately flashed in the audio, visual and print media. The Control Rooms received more than 2500 enquires from India and abroad regarding the welfare of Indians in Oman and most of the enquiries were responded to by the control room officials after confirmation and verification of the information sought. The Control Rooms were functional till mid-June, 2007.

Our Embassy, in coordination with the Local government and the Indian Community in Oman, was instrumental in planning and implementation of the rescue and relief operations for the Indians affected by the cyclone. Three hubs were established in the Muscat. Municipality area for receipt and distribution of relief material besides one each in the cities of Sur and Qurriyat to assist the affected Indians in these cities and adjacent interiors. Under the supervision of the Embassy food, drinking water, ration, medicines, clothing and beds were supplied to needy Indians in sufficient number in far-flung areas of Oman besides in Muscat. Two teams of doctors were also sent to various areas to conduct preliminary check-up of the affected people and distribute medicines. The Embassy also sent special teams to the main cities and areas affected by the hurricane to study the situation and provide necessary assistance to the local Indian Population. Indian schools were also opened to shelter the displaced Indians.

Simultaneously, rescue operations were also launched and stranded Indians were rescued as and when information about them was received. After these relief operations, the Embassy also started a drive for rehabilitation of the Indian Community in Oman, especially the weaker sections. On the initiative of the Embassy, the Indian community rose to the occasion and they raised voluntary donations from the local community and also decided to help those self-employed workers whose machines/tools had been damaged during cyclone. These self-employed Indians who lost/damaged their tools or machines during the cyclone are being given relief vouchers ranging from RO. 25/- (US $ 65) to RO. 500/ -(US$1300). Embassy has also renewed more than 7400 Indian passports, which were damaged/lost during cyclone without charging any fee. The same was done in a record time of one and a half month. All necessary assistance was also provided to those desirous of returning to India.

Central schemes and centrally sponsored schemes

*170. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the difference between Central Schemes and Centrally sponsored schemes;